

BILKENT UNIVERSITY FIRST YEAR ENGLISH INSTRUCTORS'
PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC WRITING
AND IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION

A THESIS PRESENTED BY
UMUR ÇELIKYAY
TO THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

BILKENT UNIVERSITY

JULY 2000

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ABSTRACT

Title: Bilkent University First Year English Instructors'
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This study was conducted in order to discover how the writing instructors of Bilkent University's First Year English (FYE) Program understood and defined academic writing. The underlying assumptions behind the study were that such perceptions existed but were not always explicitly expressed.

Nineteen instructors from Bilkent University's FYE Program participated in the study by answering a questionnaire. At a later stage 10 of these instructors took part in the interview procedure for the next part of the study.

The data collection procedure was handled through the administration of a questionnaire and an interview that aimed to elicit the features of academic writing as perceived and understood by the participants. Part I probed the written assignments that were most frequently made by the instructors and their assessment of these as being academic. Part II listed a set of features, which the respondents rated on a 5-point scale as being more or less essential for academic writing. In Part III holistic data was collected from the participants as they rated and commented on three

sample student papers, on the basis of the features in the papers which were representative of academic writing.

Analysis of the data was conducted by using a categorization system. Data compiled from the questionnaire were analyzed for common trends, to see how participants felt about academic writing and academic writing tasks. Similarly the interview data were separately compiled, and analyzed for common themes, concerning what was valued. The sets of data were compared to see if they matched. The resulting list of features was put against definitions that existed in the literature to see whether instructor perceptions matched these.

Results revealed that the instructors of the FYE program do have a working definition of the features and requirements of academic writing. However their priority does not seem to rest entirely on the academic aspects of writing since the instruction of the FYE seems to emphasize good writing in general. In line with the findings of the study, the researcher suggests that the FYE program should continue to work for the promotion of general writing skills, as outlined in its goals and objectives. However it would also appear that the university could benefit from the establishment of a writing across the curriculum initiative and this should be considered in future curricular plans.

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INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
MA THESIS EXAMINATION RESULT FORM
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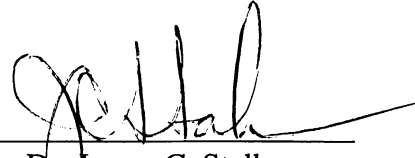
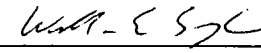
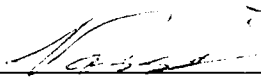
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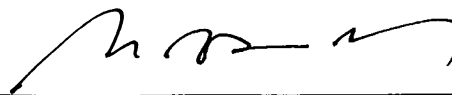
The committee has decided that the thesis of the student is satisfactory.

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We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope, and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.


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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

There is a long-standing tradition of learning and teaching foreign languages in Turkey. Recently English has become even more influential, leaving behind the other foreign languages such as French or German that were traditionally deemed important. The establishment of English-medium universities is currently making the prospect of learning this language even more attractive. However despite the widespread presence of English and the social pressure to learn it, the linguistic environment in the country is not one that necessarily facilitates this. For students of English-medium universities in a country such as Turkey, learning the language still requires a great effort. This difficulty is multifold, as it could be said that the greater challenges await these students after they finish their preparatory school language education.

Once they move into their departments, these students are suddenly forced to operate in an academic environment that is rather alien to them. At this point for these students English stops being a subject to be learned, and becomes a language to be used. They are required to undertake a host of language activities that they have never previously attempted, including involvement in academic writing and speaking. In the context of Bilkent University, this suggests a rather unnatural situation where Turkish native speaker students are expected to understand, generate, and deal with academic English. The discipline faculty will expect the students to become part of an English language academic discourse community, which means learning a whole new way of thinking about texts and writing.

Save for those who are graduates of more prestigious private secondary institutions, as things stand it is highly likely that most prospective students of

Bilkent University have never been exposed to academic texts in English. Chances are that they have not been exposed to academic texts of any kind, including texts in Turkish, since the present pre-university education in the country shows a preference towards rote memorization and test-solving strategies targeting success in university entrance examinations. This overall predilection means that the practice of academic writing and reading ranks rather low on the list of student priorities, as the first and foremost goal is securing admittance into a university. Unfortunately all this amounts to the fact that in the eyes of students entering university the role of academic writing is rendered null or at least trivial. To make the matter more complicated this new genre may have little in common with what is taught in preparatory composition classes. So, it could be claimed that for students the academic genre expected at Bilkent University is doubly alien in that it is both *English* and *academic*.

Background of the Study

Bilkent University's FYE program aims to provide students with their first exposure to intensive writing instruction. Along with this the program has many other goals that involve the instruction of the other skills (reading, presentation, library and electronic database search, computer and word processing skills etc.) that students are likely to need throughout their university life. The program has a set of goals that describes in detail the kind of activities that the students are expected to accomplish. However experience has shown that it is sometimes difficult to decide what will be taught in the program. Over the years, these goals and objectives have been updated and revised often, in order to meet changing needs and expectations.

Arguably one of the goals of such programs would be to prepare the students for the writing that they would be expected to perform in their faculties. Yet the acquisition of these skills by students is difficult. Informal conversations with Bilkent University faculty reveal that some students never completely master the kind of writing that would be required for their departmental work. There is dissatisfaction among discipline faculty even about the writing that fourth-year students produce. There may be a number of reasons behind this. Perhaps it could be attributed to the fact that the expectations of the discipline faculty are unreasonably high. Another interpretation could be that this makes up a valid pretext to avoid the taxing labor of reading and grading papers. Perhaps faculty just does not teach discipline specific writing. Reportedly, some faculty members have given up asking for writing altogether on the ground that it is “hopeless.” A member of the Faculty of Art, Design, and Architecture has reported that he had stopped requiring his freshman students to write in examinations and reverted to multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank tests. This presents a potential hazard, as it implies that these students may simply never become able to write academically, due to sheer lack of practice. In the worst case, they may never become initiated into the discourse communities of their field, even when they graduate.

When asked to provide information about any previous needs analyses that were conducted with the discipline faculty, the director of the FYE stated that these studies indeed existed, but that they were relevant only to a number of specific courses. The director went on to explain that since “the [FYE] courses are not intended to prepare students for specific needs that they will encounter in their faculties [departments], needs analysis does not seem to be an integral part of the

course design... The university administration has provided a set of goals that they want students to work on. These, in effect, become the ‘needs’ of the students” (personal communication, June 30, 2000). Hence in the Bilkent University context, the requirements and the expectations of the discipline faculty do not seem immediately pertinent for the FYE goals. This is because the university has defined the goals of the program as the teaching of general writing and exposing students to a variety of humanities topics. This means that instructors do not teach any topics that are specific to the discipline of a department. Perhaps there is justified concern that such instruction provided by the FYE would cause interference with the departmental curricula, as it is felt that discipline faculty are better qualified to do discipline related teaching.

Although it has been established that the duties of FYE involve the teaching of general writing principles and humanities, it is still natural to find that instructors should be concerned with providing their students with a good start in academic writing. Instructor offices are often enlivened by discussions concerning the difficulties that surround the acquisition of academic writing by students. However the teaching situation of the FYE is an intricate web of requirements, and this would suggest that the instructors have to cater to a lot of different expectations that come from different sources.

The goals and objectives of the program (see Appendix F) and the university mandates prescribe the overall directions of the teaching to a large extent, and these could be useful for instructors as basic guidelines for assessment of papers. However the purpose of departmental goals and objectives is usually not to provide descriptions of academic writing; hence the instructors may still not hold a clear

position as to what academic writing is. Hence it would be worthwhile to investigate this, especially since there are no explicit descriptions that would guide these people in their difficult endeavor of teaching writing.

Statement of the Problem

As the situation stands, there is no concrete evidence showing whether the FYE instructors operate on an articulated set of criteria for academic writing. If such criteria do exist, there is the danger that they may not be voiced in any obvious manner, or that they may vary from instructor to instructor. Furthermore, even if definitions of academic writing were readily available, this may not mean that teachers apply it or teach it. Their actual expectations, practices, and reactions to student writing may be very different from those stated. This may lead to confusion as to what is to be taught.

It can be assumed that this situation is highly relevant since it will bear on the design and the delivery of writing instruction, and the assessment of student writing. In this situation, it makes sense to concentrate on how the FYE instructors perceive academic writing. If such a profile of the FYE instructors is not laid out, misunderstandings and misleading expectations can arise. This insight could produce useful guidelines for curricular issues concerning the design of courses, writing prompts, or exercises. Such a definition may even help teachers in establishing common curricular grounds.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine what definitions of academic writing the FYE instructors operate under.

The forgoing discussion would seem to imply the pursuit of the following research question:

Research Question

- What features define the genre of academic writing for the FYE instructors?

It is assumed that the FYE instructors do not form a uniform discourse community and that they may to a certain extent be outsiders to the academic discourse communities of the faculties. This means that instructors may not necessarily be knowledgeable about all of the practices and beliefs of these communities and that may only share some of these. This suggests that the FYE instructors might be operating on criteria that are not articulated explicitly, even in departmental guidelines. This line of thought leads the researcher to believe that the instructors may not hold a uniform set of definitions concerning academic writing. The researcher expects to find inconsistencies in instructor beliefs about what makes a piece of writing academic.

Methods and Procedures

Nineteen writing instructors from the Bilkent University FYE program participated in the study and they filled in a three-part questionnaire about writing tasks that they most often assigned, why they assigned those tasks, and about the features of academic writing. Ten of these instructors were interviewed and they provided holistic rating evaluations on three papers from management students representing a range of academic acceptability. The answers to the questionnaires were categorized and analyzed for tasks and for common reasons for assigning tasks. The interview data were also analyzed and the answers were compared against the

results of the questionnaire data to see whether instructor criteria were consistent, from questionnaire to interview.

Due to the lack of explicit, articulated guidelines concerning academic writing, it was expected that the FYE instructors would give a wide range of answers to the questionnaires and there would be some mismatch between the questionnaire responses and the interview responses. It was expected that the holistic evaluation conducted through the interview would reveal that the actual evaluation or ranking that the FYE instructors conducted would show variation in defining features from what was professed, from what they ticked in the questionnaire. In other words, the researcher expected a different set of criteria to be at work during actual hands-on evaluation of student writing.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study proposes to look into the perceptions of academic writing as understood by the writing instructors of Bilkent University's FYE program. It is presupposed that such perceptions, whether expressed or not, have significant effects on writing instruction, and that they are closely related to beliefs and practices of the instructors, and that they may lead to significant pedagogical implications. These issues are important since the evaluation of writing is shrouded in darkness, and teachers themselves may not be fully aware of how they approach the matter (Bazerman, 1989). Hence, it might be useful to demystify the concept.

However even before embarking on the complicated task of discovering how instructors perceive academic writing, there are a number of immediate complications that come into play. The first assumption that could be misleading is that as a genre, academic writing is clearly unified and defined. Thus there is need to find a suitable definition of academic writing that will make it possible to work with perceptions. Secondly, to regard the FYE program or any other similar group as a homogenous monolith with a uniform vision would be a simplistic understatement. As will be demonstrated, research emphasizes the need to study academic writing in its proper social contexts. Hence, many scholars would argue for a socially constructed and delimited understanding of such a practice. This chapter will attempt to find a working definition of academic writing, and to place it in the social context of an academic discourse community.

Defining Academic Writing

Defining academic writing may turn out to be a difficult feat as in the literature there is considerable argument and conflict as to what would constitute

even the most basic features of academic writing (Elbow, 1991; Nash, 1990; Spack, 1988). In her attempt at demystification, Spack (1988) goes into the history of academic literacy, describing successive trends in pedagogy. Her conclusion advocates the need to study academic discourse in the context of “the relationship between discourse, community and knowledge” (p. 33) however, she refrains from providing a clear-cut definition.

Nash (1990) is not distinct either. He states that the nature of academic writing depends largely on the inclinations of the people involved. His definition is two-fold, “either ‘academic writing’ has a central meaning, and therefore a central character as an art, or it denotes something nonintegral, a diversity of loosely related techniques” (p. 9). He goes on to describe that there may also be no well-defined differences that mark the separate disciplines. Nash’s insight is that academic writing is by necessity institutional, and that its practices do not always coincide with the way the public thinks or writes.

Elbow (1991) seems to hit closer to the mark as he states that academic writing is the discourse that academicians use for their publishing purposes. He tentatively proposes what he calls a “rhetorical definition” of academic writing, “giving reasons and evidence, yes, but doing so as a person speaking with acknowledged interest to others — whose interest and position one acknowledges and tries to understand” (p. 154). He also notes that this does characterizes not only academic writing, but also “good writing” (p. 154). Another problem that he points out is that there is no uniform discourse even within a single field. He lists ten separate kinds of discourses within the field of English, and contends that for the purposes of the composition instruction this variety makes the teaching of academic

discourse practically impossible. His strongest, and somewhat playful judgment is “we can’t teach academic discourse because there’s no such thing to teach” (p. 148). Despite this, he states that he is still looking for a useful definition and emphasizes the importance of pursuing this goal; “I can’t help looking for an academic discourse I could teach in freshman writing courses” (p.151). In a sense Elbow seems to have encapsulated the problem of academic writing. It is too big a concept to be defined in a simple manner, and it may be a common label that belongs to too many distinct entities, but there is still need to look for a definition.

This makes it difficult for a group such as the FYE instructors in this study to have a concrete understanding of all these academic writing practices. Elbow’s (1991) position could indeed constitute justification that there is still need to go into inquiries concerning academic writing and academic skills. Even if a particular academic field could be singled out and studied in isolation, there would still be difficulties “because many academic writing requirements may be implicit in the curriculum of the disciplinary course and thus not amenable to ready description by the outsider” (Leki & Carson, 1994, p. 82). All this also suggests that the academic fields may not be in the immediate reach of the English language researcher. However this has not discouraged some of these “outsiders” from attempting to research the nature of academic tasks and skills, and a number of such studies (Horowitz, 1986; Johns, 1981; Leki & Carson, 1994; Ostler, 1980) have been conducted with both faculty and students. Johns (1981) surveyed faculty about the academic skills expected of nonnative students. She concludes, “Much more in-depth work... needs to be done before there is a complete understanding of the English skills required of non-native speaking students” (p. 56). Her work however

does not immediately apply to the study at hand since its focus is not solely on writing, but on other academic skills as well.

Possibly because of the difficulties involved, it could be said that the studies mentioned above generally do not produce useful lists of features for academic writing. A few other sources have provided such lists. A run down of some of these could prove to be insightful. The following is one that was meant for students:

1. The writing has one central idea or focus usually called the thesis [which is] supported by facts, ideas, statistics, observations, research, narrative incidents, illustrations, and examples, depending on the type of writing it is. The way the thesis is supported is determined by the audience and the purpose.
2. Academic writing has a purpose. This purpose can be to persuade, inform, show a process, describe, or tell a story.
3. Academic writing is most effective when the author considers the audience for which the paper is written.
4. The sentence structure used in academic writing, while always determined by the audience and purpose, usually is more detailed and complex than other writing.
5. Academic writing uses a more formal language than is used to speak (Burke, 1990).

The author does not specifically mention the sources she used to compile this information. However this is understandable since Burke's intention was informing her own students about academic writing. Although she labels this as "academic," it was not an attempt to produce a formal definition of academic writing. Hence citing sources in such a document was probably not her priority.

Another such list provides advice given to scientists who write articles:

1. [The author] must remove himself from report of his own work and thus avoid all use of the first person;
2. [The] writing should be objective and precise, with mathematics as its model;
3. [The] writing should shun metaphor and other flights of rhetorical fancy to seek a univocal relationship between word and object; and
4. [The] article should support its claims with empirical evidence from nature, preferably experimental. (Bazerman, 1984 cited in Hunston (1994), p. 192)

Hunston (1994) points out that Bazerman's list presents an accurate definition of academic writing since it essentially involves the testing of data and the use of objective and experimental procedures. However Bazerman's somewhat scientific bias may not be completely appropriate for the type of writing that is the focus of this study. The list seems to concentrate too specifically on a single discipline, and it may not work well in the general context of the FYE instruction, which caters not only to science students, but to students from social sciences as well.

It can be seen that the two lists given above could constitute two extreme positions about academic writing, since they differ highly in their specificity.

Another list that appears in Johns (1997) seems to be more comprehensive and complete, as it is neither as general as Burke's, nor as discipline-specific as Bazerman's. As the principal features of academic writing Johns (1997) lists these:

1. Texts must be explicit.

2. Topic and argument should be prerevealed in the introduction.
3. Writers should provide “maps” or “signposts” for the readers throughout the texts, telling the readers where they have been in texts and where they are going.
4. The language of texts should create a distance between the writer and the text to give the appearance of objectivity.
5. Texts should maintain a “rubber-gloved” quality of voice and register.
6. Writers should take a guarded stance, especially when presenting argumentation and results.
7. Texts should display a vision of reality shared by members of particular discourse community to which the text is addressed (or the particular faculty member who made the assignment).
8. Academic texts should display a set of social and authority relations; they should show the writer's understanding of the roles they play within the text or context.
9. Academic texts should acknowledge the complex and important nature of intertextuality without resorting to plagiarism.
10. Texts should comply with the genre requirements of the community or the classroom. (pp. 58 - 62)

Johns cites three prominent sources that were used in the compilation of this list. One is the work of the renowned cultural anthropologist Geertz, who studies academic discourse communities, and the other two are Elbow's (1991) influential study, and the work of Purves. Johns advances that “in many universities in the

world in which English is employed, these beliefs about general text features are shared” (p. 58). For practical considerations, it would seem that this list could be used as a starting point for a study concerned with perceptions of academic writing. Despite the difficulties that were mentioned, there are common threads that seem to appear in all of the work cited above.

The list that Johns (1997) provides seems to be the most comprehensive and exhaustive one; it contains many of the elements or traits listed in both Burke’s and Bazerman’s lists. Burke’s audience consideration is covered by items 7 and 8, which both seem to point to the importance of the reader’s position and stance. The complex language issue is to a certain degree covered by items 1 and 5. Finally Burke’s central focus/thesis and purpose are covered by the last item Johns’ list, which states the importance of meeting the expectations of the faculty. As for the features that Bazerman emphasizes, the removal of the author’s personality, the objectivity and the precision all seem to coincide with Johns’ fourth and fifth items, which express comparable ideas with less certitude. It could be said that Bazerman’s advice about avoiding “flights of rhetorical fancy” actually advocates the use of simple and direct language, and this is covered under Johns’ first item.

While Johns establishes the features of the genre, in his landmark work Horowitz (1986) takes another path to explore academic writing practices, as he preferred to collect and categorize actual tasks assigned by discipline faculty. Horowitz’s research classifies academic writing tasks into seven categories:

- Summary of/reaction to a reading: Horowitz points out that in the study the summary came out as the most typical of academic tasks. It was usually followed by a reaction the to an article or a book.

Apparently there were some variation to this type of task, as sometimes only a summary or a reaction was requested.

- Annotated bibliographies: Horowitz reports only one instance of the annotated bibliography. It could be said that this was not a typical task. He reports that this was a very guided task with specific instructions on the method.
- Report on a specified participatory experience: This was basically writing that was assigned to get students to report an experience and to draw a conclusion from it. This type of task did not involve reading, but asked students to develop writing from their personal perspectives.
- Connection of theory and data: This was similar to the preceding category but it required students to make connections between some sort of theoretical framework that came from a reading or a lecture and a set of data.
- Case study: This was the use of theoretical information that came from a lecture or reading. Students were usually required to apply it to a specific problem solving case.
- Synthesis of multiple sources: This was a research paper of sorts. Students were expected to compile and join information from a number of sources. Horowitz points out that requirements differed a great deal across different assignments.
- Research projects: In this type of task, students proposed and carried out a research study or an experiment. (pp. 449 - 451)

Horowitz points out that a great many of these assignments expected students to rearrange data in a way that was determined by the faculty who designed the task. Most of the assignments did not require student to create original data. It could be concluded the resulting list of tasks constitute fairly typical tasks that are assigned by discipline faculty and hence to say that they could be considered academic. However a word of caution needs to be inserted here, as Horowitz himself warns that the differences between these types of tasks is not “hard and fast” (p. 451).

Horowitz (1986) criticizes some other studies (Johns, 1981; Ostler, 1980) and advances the idea that they are inconclusive since they do not attempt a discovery and categorization of writing tasks, but rather work with preexisting categories. Horowitz states that there is no specific agreement in the research concerning what task categories could be considered academic. He states:

If all researchers were in agreement on a classification scheme for academic tasks... it would be perfectly acceptable to ask respondents to choose which tasks they considered most important. However an examination of the lists used by the different researchers reveals no such agreement. (p. 448)

Other research (Johns, 1993; Spack, 1988) also argues that looking into the actual assignments and tasks could be a suitable way to arrive at a definition of academic writing as the instructors implicitly define it. They suggest interviews with instructors or ethnographic studies could be useful for this. Horowitz (1986) also states that this information is necessary since without it, creating tasks for courses would be mostly guesswork. The literature advises care concerning the use of questionnaires, lest they be perceived as tests or even interrogations (Low, 1991).

Similarly Johns (1981) remarks on the difficulty of gathering data through questionnaires, as “such an instrument may show what faculty *think* they do” [italics added for emphasis] (pp. 51 - 52).

However despite all this, lengthy interviews or ethnographic work is time consuming and they may not be suitable for a small-scale study. Using a questionnaire about the features of academic writing and supporting this with shorter interviews seems more convenient and logical. The assignment categories that were proposed by Horowitz can be used to figure out which tasks are most often assigned by the FYE instructors and to determine what they feel about them. The features that Johns (1997) lists can be used to determine how the FYE instructors perceive academic writing. In addition, non-threatening peer-to-peer interviews that revolve around anonymous student writing can be used to make up for the deficiencies of the questionnaires.

Discourse Communities

The above discussion has revolved around the definitions of academic writing and ways to collect this information. Whatever academic writing means, whether it is articulated or not, it becomes obvious that students are expected to conform to a set of criteria, at least to become novices in it. This is what Hindman (1999) means when she talks about students “inventing the academy” or “invent academic writing” for themselves (p. 30). It would be fair to say that these requirements are by no means easily attainable, and that they form obstacles for students to fight through. In this the role of the composition teacher is sometimes seen as that of a guide, or someone who shows the doors. Research abounds in metaphors such as guarding the tower or keeping the gate, which suggest that writing instructors initiate students into

a closed group (Spack, 1988; Hindman, 1999). Similarly FYE instructors could be seen as first line of guardians at the gates which lead to full status membership in the disciplines, or in the academic discourse communities.

As previously stated, academic writing is a social construct that cannot be isolated and studied in a vacuum (Brooke & Hendricks, 1989). Instead it needs to be considered in the totality of its own context, in the university as a whole. Swales (1990) defines a discourse community as “networks that form in order to work towards sets of common goals” (p. 24-27). This definition involves many disparate elements — such as the university, the faculty, the expectations of audiences, practices, the disciplines, the bodies of knowledge, the students, and texts. Expanding on the “network,” Swales also advances six characteristics of a discourse community:

- has broadly agreed set of common public goals,
- has mechanisms of intercommunication among its members,
- utilizes and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims,
- in addition to genres, a discourse community has specific lexis,
- a discourse community has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discorsal expertise.

(pp. 24 - 27)

However, if this is the extent of specificity that makes up a discourse community, then it might be unrealistic to expect the English writing teacher to initiate the student into such an environment. This would imply that the writing instructor would need to be learned in the ways of the discourse community that is

being targeted for the students. However, it is highly unlikely that a typical writing instructor would know that much about sociology or engineering. In essence, as Leki and Carson (1994) boldly put it, writing instructors are “outsiders” (p. 82) who “are not members of these professions... not qualified to help students think and write like historians, engineers, or agricultural economists” (p. 98). Similarly Geisler notes, “The problem is that these professions, although they may be willing to let our students in, are certainly not willing to let us in” (p. 118). For Zamel this situation is “colonization” and “the problem is describing academic discourse so that those teaching ESL and composition can prepare students for the ‘real’ work of the university” (p. 192).

If writing professionals such as the members of the FYE are indeed outsiders then there is reason to believe that it will be difficult for them to deal with the practices and the values of these various communities. Instead there is need to place the FYE and similar groups in relation to the range of academic communities. Assuming that some of elements of the discourse communities are more universal than others, the writing instructor may share some of these. However, as Zamel (1998) states, such a relationship is difficult to establish, “We need to raise questions about the nature, value, and use of academic discourse, about its assumptions about what it includes and what it doesn’t, about who belongs and who doesn’t” (p. 196).

These questions may not have immediate answers, but it would appear that the matter is one of levels. It becomes increasingly apparent that in university contexts, composition teachers are usually marginalized (Petraglia, 1995). This means that they are left outside the gates of the discourse communities. If we are to adhere to Swales’ (1990) way of defining discourse communities it would make

sense to think of the FYE separately, not part of the discourse communities of departments. Perhaps, the community made up by the FYE stands as a first, initiatory step in the hierarchy of academic communities that students are expected to climb.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This research has been undertaken to establish a sounder ground for understanding the perceptions of academic writing by Bilkent University FYE language instructors. In other words, the aim was the compilation of a set of features of academic writing as understood by these individuals.

The research question that guided the construction of the questionnaire and the interview is:

- What features define the genre of academic writing for the FYE instructors?

Participants

The participants were instructors from Bilkent University's FYE program. All taught courses that they designed themselves, rather than using a departmentally required syllabus. These are writing and reading intensive, content-based courses with some research component. Initially all 45 instructors were invited to fill in the questionnaire, but only 19 instructors completed it. Ten instructors took part in the interviews for the second stage of the research.

Materials

A three-part questionnaire (Parts I-1, I-2, and II, see Appendix A) and an interview tool (Appendix B) were used to elicit the data concerning the perceptions of the FYE instructors. The questionnaire was designed to discern which particular types of writing were most frequently assigned by the FYE instructors, what they thought these aimed to achieve, and why they deemed these tasks to be pertinent for the promotion of academic writing skills in their students. It was meant to uncover how the writing tasks themselves were perceived as being academic. There was also

a section intending to discover features of academic writing as it is implicitly understood and practiced by the FYE instructors. The interview was designed to check whether the features declared by instructors were actually followed in an evaluation situation.

Part I-1 of the questionnaire was designed to probe for the kinds of academic writing tasks that are most frequently assigned by the instructors of Bilkent University's FYE program and what they thought these aimed to achieve. Instructors were also asked to clarify how they thought a particular assignment type fostered academic writing. This part was developed based on the written assignment categories that Horowitz (1986) found to be common in the university.

Part I-2 focused on what the instructors wanted to do but for various reasons could not. The preceding section only asked for the types of tasks that the instructors assigned. There could also be tasks instructors did not have an opportunity to apply but whose values they still believed in. It was hoped that this section would reveal more data about what other writing tasks were considered academic by the instructors.

Part II of the questionnaire was designed as another way to collect data about academic writing to answer the research question. In this section, the questions were based on the general definitions and features of academic writing proposed by Johns (1997). These guidelines were turned into ten questions that meant to reveal those features of the genre that were deemed by the instructors as "more or less desirable" in student writing. It was expected that the instructors would have varying answers.

The holistic evaluation protocol (Appendix B) required instructors to rate the sample student papers as "good," "passable" or "bad," through a series of questions.

The aim was to discern the academic features used by the FYE instructors for these judgements, and to elicit actual rating information. It was assumed that instructors might rate the papers differently from their answers in Parts I and II when they were using a holistic ranking system. The aim was to discover how these instructors would rate sample student papers when more specific analytic criteria were absent. This would reveal discrepancies between what the instructors professed to be doing and what they did in actual practice.

The three sample student writings (Appendices C, D and E) used for the holistic evaluation were chosen from a pool of over a hundred papers generated in 100-level *English and Composition* classes taught by the researcher. The papers were ranked by the researcher both holistically and in terms of the features that were proposed in the in the questionnaire. Hence, Paper #1 was placed as “poor,” Paper #2 as “average” and Paper #3 as “better.” The assignment involved writing a personalized definition of global culture. Care was given to select a range — from good to bad — of papers of what would be considered academic writing.

Procedures

After the features of academic writing were defined from the literature, for the purposes of this study they were adapted into a questionnaire. The initial piloting revealed that the wording of some of the questions was somewhat confusing, so some care was taken to make them less ambiguous through revision. A finalized version was given to 45 FYE instructors and collected over a three-week period in May and June.

The interviews were conducted in the month of June over a period of three days. These were held in the offices of the instructors and in BilWRITE, the writing

center of the university. Care was taken to make the interview process as non-threatening as possible. Since the aim was to elicit implicit perceptions, at this stage the instructors were not provided with any specific analytic criteria. Instead they were prompted with the questions that appear in Appendix B, which aimed to produce a flow of comments. During each interview time was given for a single reading of the papers, and following this the comments were tape-recorded.

During each interview the researcher also asked the instructors to confirm that the sample papers were “typical” of the type of writing that they were likely to receive from their students. This was done to establish that the materials were reasonably similar to what they were used to evaluating. Despite the fact that the procedure was aimed to reveal internal criteria, instructors often wanted to know on what grounds they were to consider the papers and how they would go about doing so. They also often asked what the required writing task was, which could mean that they were aware that assessment needs to revolve around some sort criteria.

Data Analysis

Results of the questionnaire were analyzed to gather the preferences of the instructors concerning academic writing. The results were categorized to show which type of writing tasks were most often assigned and why. An attempt was made to generalize the data, and the explanations provided by instructors were grouped according to recurring themes.

The interview data was also analyzed to deduce how FYE instructors rated the papers. These results were checked against the questionnaire data to see how they matched.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

For the purposes of this research study, two data collection were developed. The first one was a three-part questionnaire that aimed to elicit which academic tasks the participants actually assigned and how they thought these tasks contributed to the fostering of academic writing skills. The survey questionnaire also featured a section that elicited information about how the participating instructors perceived the features of academic writing. The second part of the research made use of a holistic rating/interview process, and this aimed to double-check the results of the questionnaire, and to see which criteria the instructors used when they were looking at papers holistically.

Questionnaire Results

Questionnaire Part I-1

Questionnaire data reveals that most instructors indeed require a substantial number of writing assignments from their students. A ranking of the answers appears in Table 1. Of these assignments, research papers were reported as being the most popular, as all of the instructors who answered the questionnaire reported that they assigned it. This was followed by summaries, essay assignments (both in and out of class), and writing that requires synthesis. Among the FYE instructors, the least popular written assignment types turned out to be take-home exams and case studies.

Table 1:

Assignment Types and Reported Frequency

Assignment	Frequency	Rank
Research Papers	19	1
Summaries of Assigned Readings	17	2
Essay Assignments	16	3
In Class Essays	16	3
Writing that Requires Synthesis	16	3
Responses to Readings	15	6
Personal Writing	13	7
Responses to Class Discussions	13	7
Analytical Writing	12	9
Essay Exam Questions	10	10
Short Answer Exam Questions	9	11
Take Home Exams	9	11
Others	4	13
Case Studies	3	14
<i>n</i> = 19		

The following is a discussion of the answers that the FYE instructor gave to the two questions that appeared on the questionnaire. The first question asked what instructors thought the assignment was meant to achieve. The second question inquired about how they thought the assignment type fostered academic writing. The percentages that appear in the discussions have been calculated by grouping the

answers that appeared to refer to similar. For example answers such as “helps develop succinct language” and “helps student write economically” have been grouped together; it was assumed that they referred to the same concepts.

Research Papers

This was the most popular assignment type, as all 19 instructors reported that they assigned research papers. According to the FYE instructors, the research paper has a variety of different aims. Their combined opinions could best be represented by one particular response, which stated that the aim of the research paper was “in short everything.” Indeed they have listed many different items as its aims: developing the skills of summary, analysis, source synthesis, issue identification, selection of sources, narrowing of topic, reflection, outlining, drafting, process writing, style, register, referencing, citation, and the preparation of bibliographies. It is also interesting to note that under other task categories, instructors have listed the research paper as the aim.

A majority (79%) of the instructors thought of research papers as academic work. These two quotations from the respondents could illustrate this view. One instructor simply wrote, “Research papers are academic.” Another was more specific, “[Research papers are academic] because they enable the ability to support a scientific point of view and provide the necessary support/explanation.” Another quote was also quite revealing, “[The research paper] is not like a simple essay. [Students] develop advanced writing skills, learn to use formal academic tone and elevated language.” This information is striking in that it shows directly how this type of assignment was perceived as being more academic than an essay.

It was interesting to find that two instructors made references to academic community. One of the wrote that research papers, “require students to enter a certain academic discourse community.” The other respondent said that it was a “truly academic approach, work done with emphasis on detail, in relation to the academic community.” These are important because they constitute evidence that some of the instructors are aware of the concept of an academic community.

Overall the answers of the instructors would suggest that for the FYE group research papers are, as one instructor expressed it, “the ultimate academic writing. Helps students familiarize with the process, convention and rules.” This could be because this task requires students to concurrently use all the writing skills and all other writing tasks that they learn. This could help explain the variety of aims that the instructors associated with this assignment type. Clearly the instructors thought of research papers as academic work.

One interesting note is that the research paper itself was also often listed as the aim of the other task types. Here other tasks have been listed as the aim of the research paper. This could be interpreted to mean in the minds of the instructors the ends and the means are not completely clear, or that they believe that spiral relationship exists between the research paper and other tasks. Other tasks help the research paper, which in turn helps the other tasks.

Summaries of Assigned Readings

This was the second most popular assignment category. Seventeen of the respondents expected their students to write source and reading text summaries. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents thought that the aims of summaries were to help students with the comprehension of reading content, and to provide the teacher

with a tool to check this. As one instructor expressed it, the summary “demonstrates importance of the full comprehension of the text, teaches to differentiate between major and minor ideas.” Fifty-one percent of the responses also emphasized that summaries made students deal with the texts at multiple levels, helping with both overall and in-detail comprehension.

In connection with academic writing, 59% of the instructors thought that summary writing enabled exposure and engagement with academic texts. According to the respondents, this type of task also helped with the writing of research papers, since summaries were usually integrated into such work. According to 21% of the respondents, summary writing would also contribute to the development of the clear and succinct language associated with written academic work. As one instructor put it, “Helps students think about the text, to clarify the content. Helps students prepare for writing that involves that text and other texts.”

On the whole, the answers of the instructors suggest that they did not see this as an academic activity in itself. Rather as one sample answer illustrates, to them summary writing was “one of the most important steps that [students] need to take for the later stages of academic writing.” It can be gathered that the perceived role of the summary was secondary, that it was a subordinate tool of academic writing.

Essays Assignments and In-Class Essays

Both of these ranked 3rd among the writing tasks that instructors reported to assign most frequently. The two categories have been joined because the answers showed great similarity. The aims of the essay as stated by the instructors showed some variety, but 79% answered that it was related to the development of writing skills in general. Organization, rhetoric, and argumentation were given priority.

78% of the instructors stated that essays were a teacher's tool for checking comprehension and the students' writing abilities.

For the in-class version of the essay, 51% of the instructors placed emphasis on the fact that it made students produce writing in a single sitting, without going through several drafts. They felt that this had kinship to examination situations, where students had to write under similar time constraints.

In general in their answers the instructors did not focus much on the contribution of the essay to academic writing. Only 16% of the instructors thought that the essay helped develop academic writing. One instructor wrote the essay was "the core of a writing class." Another answer stated that the essay "is academic writing." Interestingly, one instructor specifically stated that this was "no help for academic writing." This partially proves the concern about the existence of different understandings among FYE instructors. At this point it is also worth remembering the comment made by one instructor concerning the difference between essays and research papers (see the section related to research papers above).

Whether written in or outside of the classroom, some of the instructors do not see the essay as an academic task. Yet the relative popularity of this task among instructors proves that they believe in the usefulness of essays. This might suggest that for the FYE instructors the essay practice leads did not necessarily constitute an academic task, but that it is perceived more as a tool to get students to improve writing in general. One instructor's comment would illustrate this well; [the essay] "develops ability to formulate ideas, necessary for all types of writing."

Writing that Requires Synthesis

This type of reading ranked the same as the two essay types, which is 3. As for the aims, 64% of the instructors stated that this type of task helped students integrate sources into their own thoughts. One response stated that this was important because it made “sources talk to each other, and integrate[d] a variety of positions into a unified work.”

Forty-three percent of the instructors recognized that this task was important in academic writing but they provided little detail as to how. They were content to say that synthesis helped students deal with sources, and with academic conventions such as citation, paraphrasing, and references. One instructor said “academic writing requires it.” Another seems to condense the opinions: “Fosters source use, bringing together of info in a logical way, [helps with] academic conventions, helps with references, and citations.”

Responses to Readings

Among FYE instructors this category of assignments had a rank of 6. Most answers stated that the aim was encouraging the emergence of critical thinking and student reaction to texts. The instructors also mentioned that this type of writing activity enabled students to make connections between the readings and their own ideas. To a lesser extent there was mention of helping students with the comprehension of content.

For some, this constituted an opportunity for students to be exposed to academic texts and to react to them. The instructors thought that responses to readings enabled the merging of text ideas with those of the students, and this they

thought was as an academic skill, since the students would be expected to perform such tasks in their departmental studies.

Personal Writing

The rank of personal writing was 7, and 13 of the FYE instructors reported that they routinely assigned it. The words “self,” “own” and “personal” came up quite often in this category, and 64% of the instructors seemed to think that the expression of the students’ selves was important. About half (54%) of the answers stated that this type of writing made the students more aware, or more engaged with the idea of writing, without the pressure that is usually associated with writing. Some claimed that this also meant freedom for the student since there was no direct teacher control over the product. Whereas instructors thought that personal writing was beneficial for student writing in general, 45% also seemed to think that this kind of writing constituted a prelude or “an initiation to academic writing.” One instructor stated that it enabled the students to “move from the personal into the public.”

The answers could be interpreted to mean that this type of writing was valued because it fosters in students a real desire to communicate. This type of assignment is not obviously academic in itself. However it fosters fluency in student writing which would be valued in academic writing.

Response to Classroom Discussions

This category got 13 responses, but it is rather difficult to generalize the answers, as it became obvious that the response could also fall under other assignment types such as essays or personal writing. A majority of the answers (69%) stated that responses to classroom discussions fostered critical thinking skills

in students. Forty-one percent of the answers stated that this was useful for developing students' abilities of expression, while a smaller percentage of 33% felt that this kind of activity was little more than a comprehension check. One person also mentioned that the interactive nature of discussion facilitated the integration of ideas on paper.

Overall, only 27% of the instructors mentioned the contributions that this made to academic writing and these were mostly preparatory functions. It was obvious that the instructors connected response to classroom discussions with free expression and with the developing of critical thinking abilities, and these were valued as being preliminary to academic writing. Overall this was not considered an academic writing task in itself. One instructor's comments illustrates this general tendency, "[responses to classroom discussions] foster critical thinking and making connections between texts and students' own ideas."

Analytical Writing

Analytical Writing ranked 6 in the preferences of the instructors. The answers of the instructors suggest that other types of assignments such as essays or research papers could also count as analytical writing. Overall, 69% of the responses indicated that analytical writing helped promote the development of critical thinking skills in students. One instructor stated that analytical writing helped students understand logical relationships in thinking.

It forced students to consider multiple perspectives when they were writing. Some answers stated that analytical writing helped with developing sophistication and general writing principles such as organization, attention to detail, and argumentation.

Overall instructors did not give consistent responses concerning the contribution of this type of task to academic writing. One response specifically stated that analytical writing was an “exercise... in a core academic task,” and there was also one mention of “scientific and logical thinking.” Another answer stated that analytical writing was the basis for academic thinking. This item did not yield too much information, probably because it was not defined clearly in the questionnaire.

Essay Exam Questions, and Short Answer Exam Questions

Essay exam and short answer exam questions ranked lower in the preferences (respectively, 10 and 11) of the instructors. They have been grouped together since they appear to constitute a single answer category. According to the 73% of the instructors, the main aim behind these tasks was checking and testing student comprehension of course content.

Fifty-three percent of the instructors thought that this type of writing activity allowed student to work under the pressure of limited time and scope. This was, according to the instructors, required in the field and in the other courses. Hence these tasks enabled the students to produce sharply focused, concise language that was academic. An interesting contrast came up in the answers. While one instructor stated this constituted an “authentic need to write,” another commented that it was an “artificial situation but...unavoidable in academia.”

Take Home Exams

Only 7 instructors assigned this type of writing task and it was among the least popular with a rank of 13. The instructors mostly thought of it as a checking and testing tool. Seventy-one percent of the instructors who assigned take home exams mentioned that it enabled students to have more opportunity to do research

and to think about the writing. Only one person mentioned that take home exams prevented memorization that could happen in in-class test situations, and allowed a less stressful environment in which students could produce detailed and thought-out answers to questions.

Instructors made very few mentions of any connections with academic writing. One response confessed, “I’m not really sure about this,” while another one stated that this was “a way of testing academic writing.” It can be assumed that this is another one of the tasks not really considered academic by the FYE instructors, but it was important because it fostered research skills.

Case Studies

This was by far the least favorite assignment category. Three instructors reported that they assigned case studies, and only two provided rather brief comments. One instructor thought that the aim of case studies was “to apply theory to a given set of facts” and this was “a common academic endeavor.” According to the other instructor case studies “provide room for further research and to develop ideas.”

Clearly these answers do not reveal much about why this type of writing task was not popular among the FYE instructors. Case studies would probably be considered quite common and necessary in some fields, such as psychology, sociology, or management. However, it could be advanced that they would be rather difficult to apply in the English composition classroom since they might require a working knowledge in such an external field. Chances are that many of the FYE instructors do not have this type of training. This could constitute one more

argument in favor of leaving the teaching of subject area content to the discipline faculty (Spack, 1988).

Others

This category had been added to the questionnaire to discern any other type of writing tasks that were considered academic by the respondents. As it turns out the answers provided for this question were either did not qualify as a task type (i.e. “process writing”) or they could be placed into one of the other categories (i.e. classroom tests). One interesting response was “book reports, drama, fiction, poetry,” but the respondent was “not sure this qualifies as academic writing.”

Conclusions

The data from Part I-1 of the questionnaire reveals that FYE instructors think that most of the tasks that they routinely assign are not necessarily academic. The notable exception to this is the research paper, which is to this group of instructors, the “real” academic task. Apparently, the research paper involves many of the other tasks that the instructors did not recognize as academic, but as auxiliary to academic writing. The summary was one such task, and it was established as leading to academic writing. This is in sharp contrast to Horowitz’s (1986) results, which locates these as academic since discipline faculty assigns them fairly frequently.

It was interesting to note that in the minds of the FYE instructors, certain assignment categories had specific developmental functions that were not necessarily academic. For example responses to discussions and to readings, analytical writing all aimed to the foster critical thinking skills; the exam tasks were tools that checked content and helped develop specific writing skills (writing under time constraints, conciseness in writing etc.). Other task types, such as essays were not generally

considered as academic but perceived more as tools that help develop general writing skills. Personal writing was generally seen as a means of developing comfort or fluency in writing, and the position of the instructors on the contribution to academic writing was not clear. Instructors recognized that some tasks such as writing that involves synthesis were connected to academic writing, but the questionnaire data did not reveal the exact nature of this connection.

Overall, it would seem that the FYE instructors are not specifically concerned with academic writing. Although Horowitz (1986) has established most of these assignment categories as routinely academic, in this part of the questionnaire FYE instructors have not usually perceived them as such. The situation here may in fact be what Elbow (1991) notes; it is essentially difficult to differentiate between good academic writing and good writing in general. The existence of this gray zone may explain to a degree why the FYE instructors have generally not recognized their own assignments as being academic. There is reason to believe that there might be rules that are common both to good academic writing and to good writing in general. Perhaps this means that the perceptions of the FYE instructors are justified; in their effort to teach the principles of general writing skills they may be promoting academic writing as well.

Questionnaire Part I-2

The question that was asked in this part of the questionnaire was, “what are some academic writing tasks, which would you like to assign to your students but for various reasons cannot? What other tasks do you think foster academic writing?” The questions aimed to get more information about what the FYE instructors thought other tasks were and how they thought these would help with academic writing.

Fifteen of the 19 instructors took time to answer Part I-2, but the answers did not yield much that was substantially different from Part I-1. Some of the answers provided were not directly relevant to the cultivation of academic writing (web page design). Others only reflected wishes of instructors about activities that they would like to do (case studies, critical book reviews, creative writing). Yet others dealt with alternative, improved ways of implementing writing instruction (peer feedback, peer evaluation, peer editing, combined individual/group projects) rather than presenting new tasks. The answers that could be categorized more or less in terms of the assignment types proposed in the previous section were omitted from this discussion.

A small number of answers were still relevant to the issue at hand, albeit tangentially. These were concerns about time limitations, the need to get students more involved into their own work, and strongly expressed beliefs about the connection between reading and academic writing. Instructors reported that they had too much to deal with, and that this did not leave room for doing activities that could help with academic writing. The comment of one instructor reveals this: "Time constraints have driven me to reduce the number of assignments I would assign such as case studies." Another instructor expressed that the students needed more writing and more variety in writing, but that there was only opportunity to cater to language level needs.

Instructors also stated that they did not have opportunity to do more reading, which they felt could be useful with academic writing. They also thought there was a need to find more ways to get "more student involvement in assigning their own writing tasks." One instructor stated that they needed "more writing tasks that draw on students' real life experiences and interests [which] also foster academic writing."

Another instructor believed that “self- and peer editing, analysis of their own writing problems also foster academic writing.” Writing about the same issue, one instructor had this particularly aggressive comment, “How about what does not foster academic writing? Students don’t give a damn about what other students think about their writing no matter how hard you train them to do peer review.”

While some instructors felt that there was not enough time to do academic work, another respondent wrote, “I think that the types of writing on the syllabus pretty much cover the needs of these particular students.” It would appear that the teacher seemed content with the tasks that were assigned to the students. However this teacher added that academic writing could be fostered further through reading that focused on overall evaluation of sources, and “critical evaluation of specific textual claims.”

Another relevant quote points to the connection between writing practice and supporting academic writing: “I think that any type of writing (even personal writing) that requires students to support their position, a ‘shows’ rather than ‘tells’ approach can foster academic writing/thinking.”

The most significant comment that was made in Part I-2 relates directly to the study at hand. “We need to define what we mean by academic writing. To me it involves all of the mentioned above.” This is proof that this instructor is aware of the need for such definition.

Questionnaire Part II

This section reveals that most of instructors appear to be somewhat in agreement with the features that were proposed by Johns (1997), as most were rated high on the desirable side. Acknowledging other sources without plagiarism and

early appearance of the topic and argument were equally deemed as the most important features of student academic writing. Even features that received relatively lower ratings such as guarded stance and objective voice/register tended to place closer to the middle of the scale. Instructors seemed to think that distance between the writer and the text was the least important feature of the genre. However these results may not be immediately meaningful by themselves, as they do not necessarily reflect what instructors do when they are actually facing student papers. The interview data shall reveal if these are indeed considered by the instructors during assessment.

Table 2:

Answers Given to Features of Academic Writing

Features	Mean Rating	Rank
Prerevealed topic and argument	4.74	1
Acknowledging other sources without plagiarism	4.74	1
Explicitness of texts	4.47	3
Meeting genre requirements of the community or the classroom	4.47	3
Use of maps/signposts	4	5
Consideration of authority relations	3.69	6
Objective voice and register	3.59	7
Guarded stance, hedging	3.5	8
Shared reality	3.13	9
Distance between writer and text	2.69	10
<hr/> <i>n</i> =19 Scale = 1 lowest, 5 highest		

Commentary About Questionnaire Results

Parts I-1 and I-2 reveal that the FYE instructors tended to view most of the writing tasks that they assigned as not necessarily academic. With the notable exception of the research paper, most tasks were considered as leading to academic writing, but not as being academic writing themselves. It would appear that the research paper is the flagship of writing tasks, as it includes and requires all of the other skills. Despite all this, it is also interesting to note that as aims for the research paper, instructors listed all the other skills.

Similarly the summary was academic, but only as far as it served the higher purposes of a more complex task, namely writing research papers. Instructors sometimes labeled particular tasks as academic, but could not always pinpoint the exact reasons. One surprise finding is that the essay, arguably one of the most traditional academic tasks was not necessarily perceived as academic either. While instructors had clear opinions about which tasks lead to academic writing, they could not always express the reasons.

For Part II, it would seem that FYE instructors placed higher importance for the features that related equally to good writing and academic writing. Overall, the features that more typically emphasized the textual practices of a discourse community were valued less than the features that could also relate to good general writing. An example is the distance that would be expected between writer and text. This received a lower rating, as did the question about the shared realities pertaining to a particular discourse community.

Overall it would seem that the FYE instructors' notions about academic writing are closely related to the notions of good writing in general. This may not be a surprise since the line between a good general writing and good academic writing tends to be fuzzy. As the review of literature points out, the notion of academic writing probably makes better sense when placed in the proper social and cultural context (i.e. that of a discourse community).

Interview Results

The interview tool was designed to discover what overall features of academic writing FYE Instructors valued during actual assessment of student papers. The interviews focused on three student writing samples, and the questions that

appear in Appendix B. The papers had a common theme that involved definitions of globalization, but they were executed somewhat differently, and represent different ranges of writing. During the interviews the researcher tried to elicit a continuous flow of comments that would reveal information about what internal criteria the instructors were using in an assessment situation.

Paper #1

All instructors who participated in the interviews identified this paper as the worst of the three papers. One of instructor actually said that the paper was “horrible.” All instructors recognized that this reflected a weak student’s writing. Overall, the instructors noted that the paper suffered from a general lack of direction. They thought that it was not properly organized and was poorly developed. Instructor 4 said that it was “too personal, too simple and too short.” Instructor 10 thought it was “not developed and not finished... more like prewriting.”

More importantly, instructors commented about the apparent lack of the purpose and intention in the sample. They thought that it did not even accomplish the task it set out to do. There was indeed some sort of idea laid out in the beginning of the paper, but it was not followed through. Instructor 3 said that this did not lead to a definition, which was apparently the purpose of the paper. Similarly, Instructor 9 commented that the starting point restricted the content.

They also pointed out the fact that generalizations were made from a single, narrow, and personal point of view. This decreased the value of the writing. Instructor 3 called this a “personal digression” and he thought this was a good idea that did not work. He said that “in the process of talking about the family the writer has gotten lost... They did not reconnect to the original intention sufficiently.”

According to the participants, the language of the paper was over-generalized, vague, and repetitive. It was deemed too simple, and not appropriate for an academic audience. Instructor 8 said that there was “not an actual real sentence that I can say... This person could have actually done this in two sentences... Doesn’t say anything.” Another participant, Instructor 5 said that the paper was “just made up of free associations.”

The instructors pointed to the student’s attempt to quoting and referencing, and recognized that there was some attempt at writing “academically.” Instructor 3 said that there was an “attempt to define a term through personal experience [which] is certainly fairly standard practice in academia.” However he pointed out that other examples, or the development of the family concept were needed for a proper definition.

The instructor comments on this paper reveal that they value the following characteristics in student writing. The answers have been approximately ranked in order of perceived importance based on what the instructors emphasized the most:

1. The writing has a clear sense of direction or purpose that is set from the beginning.
2. It is developed enough to accomplish what it sets out to do.
3. It attempts to consider a multitude of perspectives instead of relying on a single, personal perspective.
4. It has a sense of organization suitable for the purpose at hand.

Paper #2

All instructors identified this paper as better than Paper #1. However there were some disagreements about how well it was developed. Most of the instructors

thought that the purpose of this sample was clear. Instructor 2 said that in the “intro the student did make it generally clear where he was going. And then he did follow up on it.” They also thought that the paper was developed and supported with ample details from the writer’s own experience.

Consideration of a multitude of perspectives made the paper objective.

Instructor 10 thought that the paper was sophisticated, “in the way that an academic writer would pose questions, saying the context and locating himself in it.”

Instructor 3 stated that the paper “says a lot about the expectations of an academic audience is... It’s not polemical, it seems very reasonable. It seems like they’re looking for a kind of middle ground, and I think that’s the kind of thing that to an academic reader would be a sign of sophistication as opposed to someone sounding very, very paranoid.”

While on the whole this paper was identified as being better than Paper #1, some instructors still saw some problems with it. They thought that this sample was somewhat deficient, that it needed more development. The notable exception was the third paragraph, which contained too much information. Interestingly, one instructor thought that the paper did not go anywhere. Another thought that there was too much personalization. Instructor 8 stated that the paper “doesn’t show an awful lot of thinking, it’s just accepting commonly held truths or distruths and making a paper out of it.” She also thought that the paper was “running all over the place...” Instructor 9 thought that the overall stance was far from obvious, that there was no decision made on the part of the writer. She said that there were conflicts that resulted in “beating around the bush.”

Generally the language was deemed acceptable though not without its share of redundancy. Instructor 5 thought that it could still use “some editing and proofreading.” Instructor 2 said that occasionally the language used was conversational, and that the student could have found other, more suitable ways to express the same ideas.

The instructor comments on this paper reveal that they value these characteristics in student writing. The answers have been approximately ranked, in order of perceived importance based on what the instructors emphasized the most:

1. The writing has a clear sense of direction or purpose that is set from the beginning.
2. It attempts to go outside for support and does not rely too heavily on the personal.
3. It deals with issues in a sophisticated and reasonable manner, not taking a position that is absolute.
4. It shows some evidence of forethought and revision.
5. It uses language appropriate for the task at hand.

Paper #3

Instructor has some disagreements over the rating of this paper. While three of them placed this paper in the same category as the pervious paper, three others thought it was worse. The others thought it was the best in the batch. One instructor commented that the ranking was “difficult to say.” In short the instructors did not seem to be entirely in agreement over this paper.

Overall, there was agreement among the instructors that this writer handled sequencing and logical connections and organization well, but two of the instructors

thought that the length was misleading, that it was not really a fully developed paper. It was subjective and generalized, and depended only on personal knowledge for support. They said that the paper only gave an appearance of objectivity. Instructor 5 found it difficult to rate the paper saying that it “appeared to be complete at first glance, a thorough analysis.” Instructor 1 said that this sample was “as if the writer tried to look from multiple perspective [but it is] not so.” According to the same instructor there were too many abrupt jumps from the personal to non-personal.

On the other hand other instructors thought that the paper appeared well researched and developed. Instructor 3 stated that the personalization was not problematic, as the writer usually got back on track. Instructor 3 also thought that transitions were adequate. Interestingly, they were content with the abundance of examples and thought that this was successful. Instructor 8 stated that this was a “well thought out paper,” and that the writer had probably used an outline. Unlike other participants who found the text too personal, both instructors 8 and 9 stated that the language was used well, and that the use of the first person made this more fluent and readable.

The instructor comments from this paper reveal that they value these characteristics in student writing. The answers appear approximately ranked in terms perceived importance based on what the instructors emphasized the most:

1. The writing is adequately organized and proceeds logically.
2. It manages to balance the personal and the non-personal.
3. It supports its position with an abundance of examples.
4. It demonstrates some evidence of forethought.

About Academic Writing

During the interviews the instructors made occasional comments about academic writing as it related to the writing samples that were at hand. In some cases these turned out to be quite revealing in terms of their perceptions of academic writing. When the question “How academic is this?” came up, Instructor 9 stated, “if I knew what academic was I could tell you.” Instructor 8 had a more interesting answer, “I don’t think I have actually seen anybody define it. I have gone through the Internet for the last one week trying to find out what academic writing is and... sorry I don’t know what it is.”

Some of the instructors seemed to have less vague ideas about academic writing. To Instructor 4 academic writing meant “good writing, specific, less personal, not conversational, expression [is] not necessarily academic.” Instructor 3 said, “I have a lot of trouble with what academic means because the academy makes a lot of room for a lot of ways of speaking.” He also added that common opinion held that academic writing had “formal, stiff measures... [it is] sympathetic to multiplicity of perceptions. But, I don’t believe that academics write like that all the time.” To this instructor academic writing consisted of “issues about knowing your audience, knowing how they can be moved and persuaded.”

Compilation of the Criteria from the Interviews

Based on the comments that the instructors have made on the papers, it would appear possible compile their expectations from student writing. The items have been approximately ranked in order of perceived importance:

1. The writing has clear sense of direction or purpose that is set from the beginning.

2. The writing attempts to go beyond the personal and to consider a multitude of perspectives.
3. The writing is adequately organized and proceeds logically.
4. It is developed sufficiently for what it sets out to do.
5. It is supported with sufficient examples.
6. It deals with the issues in a sophisticated and reasonable manner, not taking a position that is absolute.
7. It demonstrates some evidence of forethought and revision.
8. It uses language that is appropriate for the task at hand.

Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Results

Part I of the questionnaire results could be interpreted to mean that this group of instructors are to a certain extent aware of what is expected of students in academic environments. However with the exception of the research paper, they feel that the tasks that they assign revolve around getting to academic writing. The instructors usually perceived tasks as not being academic, but rather as leading to the academic.

Part II of the questionnaire yields itself to comparison with the interview results. When questionnaire results are matched to what was reported in the interviews, the FYE instructors have been mostly consistent. Prerevealed topic and argument, meeting genre requirements, consideration of authority relations, guarded stance and shared reality were the features that the FYE instructors ranked consistently between the questionnaire and the interview. The instructors were not consistent for explicitness of text; objective stance/hedging; and distance between

writer and text. The analysis of two features, namely, acknowledging other sources without plagiarism and use of signposts was inconclusive.

Three features were not consistently ranked from the questionnaire to the interview. For two of these — objective stance/hedging; and distance between writer and text — interview data reveals that the FYE instructors were actually more concerned than they declared in the questionnaire. This is actually evidence that these are part of their inner criteria, and that they implicitly recognize them as being desirable in student writing. Overall this presents a positive picture for the FYE instructors' perceptions of academic features.

Prerevealed Topic and Argument.

In Part II of the questionnaire FYE instructors ranked this as the most desirable feature in student writing. Although the instructors may not have specifically used the words “prerevealed topic or argument” in the interviews, they made remarks to the effect that the intention of the writer had to be established early on in the writing. As the compilation of interview data shows, this was the feature that was ranked as the most important. If it is assumed that two overlap to some degree, then it could be said that the instructors were consistent from the questionnaire to the interview.

Acknowledging Other Sources Without Plagiarism.

Though this was the other feature that received the highest rank, it was not mentioned in the interviews at all. Though it could be projected that this was not as important as instructors had said, a better explanation may involve the nature of the papers that were being examined. Since these were little more than personal essays, they did not lend themselves to the use of sources. It could be projected that feature

this would have received more coverage in the interview, if the sample papers were of a different nature (i. e. research papers, or summaries). Hence it would be difficult to draw out any specific conclusions for this item.

Explicitness of Texts

In the questionnaires FYE instructors ranked this as the third most important feature of academic writing. During the interviews however, they only made comments about explicitness of language when the language was quite deficient as in the case of Paper #1. This was also the item that ranked lowest in the interviews. It could be said that for this feature, the instructors were not consistent from the questionnaire to the interview but this does not mean that they did not place value on this feature.

Meeting Genre Requirements of the Community or the Classroom

This received a high rank in the questionnaire. Although it did not come up explicitly during the interviews, instructors very frequently inquired about what prompts that the samples were supposed to be answering. This demonstrates that they were clearly concerned about what expectations the papers were to fulfill. It could be advanced that the instructors have been consistent in terms of this feature.

Use of Maps/Signposts

This was the fifth most important feature according to the questionnaire. In the interviews, this feature was not mentioned explicitly, but it could be said that it was covered to a certain extent under the wider category of “adequate organization.” However, it is difficult to draw a clear-cut conclusion about this feature, since the interviews do not provide sufficient data.

Consideration of Authority Relations

This received a low rank of 6 in the questionnaire, and accordingly the instructors made no comments about it during the interviews. It could be assumed that instructors did not value this feature as both questionnaire and interview data seem to match.

Objective Voice and Register

According to the questionnaire this ranked 7th in terms of desirability in student writing. As previously expressed there was not much mention of language in the interviews. However the instructors have shown that they were highly concerned with the issue of objectivity, since it came up as the consideration of multiple viewpoints. It could be said that there was some discrepancy from the questionnaire to the interview. But the interview revealed that was indeed an important issue in writing and that instructors expected objectivity in student writing.

Guarded Stance, Hedging

The rank for this item in the questionnaire was 8, which is low. During the comments on the papers instructors mentioned students had to deal with their topic in a reasonable manner not taking a position that is absolute. This was ranked lower in the priorities, which fits with the ranking that was declared in the questionnaire. Instructors have demonstrated that they were consistent about this feature.

Shared Reality

This was one of the features that ranked among the lowest in the questionnaire (9). During the interview the instructors did not mention this feature, hence there seem to be no discrepancy from the questionnaire to the interview. This

could be due to the level or the novice nature of the papers, and using more advanced papers might have produced different results.

Distance Between Writer and Text

This was the one feature that received the lowest rank (10) in the questionnaire. However the issue of the personal versus the non-personal came up quite often in the interview data, proving that the FYE instructors were actually quite concerned with this feature. The discussions during the interview were not conclusive as to how much personalization was expected in student writing.

Extra Categories that Came up in the Interviews

During the interviews instructors have also mentioned a few other features that they considered important. These are adequate development in student writing (category 4 in the list compiled from the interviews), support through examples (category 5), and evidence of forethought and revision (category 7). It is not surprising that these are not listed under the features that Johns (1997) considers important, it was probably taken for granted that an academic piece of writing would be well developed, well thought-out and revised as necessary. It could be assumed that overall these extra categories do not present any significant deviance from the criteria.

Conclusions

The comparison shows that the instructors have been more or less consistent in terms of what they declared in the questionnaire and what they actually did during the interviews. This is positive as it demonstrates that they are well aware of what is generally expected in student writing. However, an examination of the list distilled from the interviews and their perceptions about the tasks they assigned would reveal

that their understanding comes closer to that of good writing in general. This suggests that the FYE instructors might be approaching the matter from a writing teacher's perspective.

It can be said that the resulting list matched the list proposed by Johns (1997) to a certain extent. It also shows some affinity with the one that Burke (1990) lays out. The questionnaire and interview results would reveal that while still being aware of the expectations of academic environment, FYE instructors have an understanding of academic writing that centers around the principles of good, general writing as shown by the list of features that they deemed most important.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Overview of the Study

This study aimed to discover the implicit definitions of academic writing as perceived by the instructors of the FYE program of Bilkent University. The inquiry was meant to reveal insights about the beliefs and the practices of the FYE instructors concerning academic writing and writing in general. It was assumed that the FYE instructors would not form a coherent discourse community, and that they would have inconsistent perceptions of academic writing. The research question was what features define the genre of academic writing for the FYE instructors?

Findings

The analysis of the data reveals that the FYE program instructors understand the academic genre as a series of features that revolve around the general principles of good writing. It also appears that the initial expectations of the researcher concerning discrepancies in instructor criteria were not met, and that the FYE proved to be a coherent discourse community. While it could be said that the study did not necessarily generate instructor criteria for *academic* writing, the results still imply that a firmly established set of internal criteria concerning what constitutes good writing exists in the minds of the instructors. In short, for them academic writing is good writing. Here is a list of the features that the FYE instructors value in student writing:

1. The writing has clear sense of direction or purpose that is set from the beginning.
2. The writing attempts to go beyond the personal and to consider a multitude of perspectives.

3. The writing is adequately organized and proceeds logically.
4. The writing is developed sufficiently for what it sets out to do.
5. The writing is supported with sufficient examples.
6. The writing deals with the issues in a sophisticated and reasonable manner, not taking a position that is absolute.
7. The writing demonstrates some evidence of forethought and revision.
8. The writing uses language that is appropriate for the task at hand.

Discussion

The present study reveals that the FYE instructors have a coherent set of internal features that define the expectations from student writing. However it has been difficult to determine whether this set relates specifically to academic features, or to those of good writing in general. Elbow (1991) has already established that it is difficult to find a definition of academic writing that does not also apply to good writing in general (see review of literature). The list that resulted from this study is in some ways akin to the one that Burke (1990) proposes. Although Burke's list was labeled "academic," upon close scrutiny it is possible to classify most of the items as also being valid for what could be called general good writing. Burke talks about the existence of a central idea, but this could also true of other types of writing such as fiction or journalism. Similarly the concepts of purpose and audience would apply to most writing as well. As for the last item on Burke's list, this is a comment on the nature of written discourse in general, and not a characteristic peculiar to academic writing. Written language is always more complex than spoken language. This only leaves item number 4, which talks about the sentence structure used in academic

writing. This is indeed one of the characteristics of academic language, as was established (Swales, 1990; Johns, 1997).

The study has in essence established that the FYE instructors were practicing what they preached. They were consistent in terms of the features they deemed desirable in a list, and the way they perceived them while they were commenting on student papers. The study has also distilled a list of the characteristics that were desirable in student writing. Despite some disagreements over the rating of sample papers, FYE instructors appear to share common understandings and beliefs about what is expected of student writing, and practice these. Within the larger scope of the university's discourse communities, for their own purposes this establishes them as a separate discourse community, with a more or less uniform understanding of the texts and the practices. Even if the instructors do not perceive their work as being academic, they are still fulfilling an essential duty of introducing their students to the notions of good writing. As Elbow (1991) would have it "we need nonacademic discourse even for the sake of helping students produce good academic discourse — academic language that reflects sound understanding of what they are studying in disciplinary courses" (p. 147). There is evidence that teaching general writing is in the long run useful for the acquisition of academic writing.

It would appear that the deficiencies with Bilkent students' academic writing does not lie with the instructors. This study has shown that these people appear to be on sound ground in terms of criteria and perceptions of academic writing. They appear to fulfill the university's expectations in terms of teaching good general writing. The problem may be in the requirements of the university which direct the

FYE to teach a general humanities based curriculum, and away from teaching academic writing explicitly.

Limitations of the Present Study

Because the results of the present study are based on data from a limited number of participants, the researcher would like to warn against generalizing them to other teaching contexts. It would also appear that the writing situation in Bilkent University is rather unique, and this suggests that the present study may not immediately apply to other university writing contexts.

There were a number of limitations with this study. The first and most important involved the use of questionnaires. First, there was the typical problem with the administration of the questionnaires and the collection of the completed forms, which proved to be difficult due to time that was allocated to them. In the end, only 19 of the 45 instructors who were initially contacted returned filled-out questionnaires. This low number did not justify the use of statistical procedures, which could have also produced more useful data.

For Parts I-1 and I-2, the open-ended nature of the questionnaire left much room for unexpected and irrelevant answers and this occasionally made the analysis of the data difficult. Another problem involves the terminology that is used for the assignment types. As Horowitz notes (see review of literature) it is sometimes difficult to distinguish exactly what differentiates a certain task from another. Hence the answers of the instructors would have been more meaningful if the questionnaire had more specifically laid out how a particular writing task was different from others. In its present state the questionnaire has not been able to discern what was meant when a writing task was mentioned. For example, it is possible that a label

such as “essay” could have been used by the instructors to denote a different of writing tasks.

For Part II instructors noted that some questions occasionally got difficult to understand. This suggests that the wording of the questionnaire may not have been clear enough and that more thorough piloting would have been useful. This could in part account for some of the differences that have emerged between the questionnaire and the interview data. As an illustration, the “Acknowledging other sources without plagiarism” item on the questionnaire may have received high rating because of the immediate aversion that the word “plagiarism” suggests. A more carefully designed instrument would have yielded more useful data. The overall benefit was that the questionnaire still produced some data about how the instructors perceived academic writing and academic writing tasks. These have been useful in the comparison with interview data.

For the interview and holistic assessment procedures, the instructors were somewhat uneasy with what was asked. One instructor was reluctant to make any negative comments about the papers. From her point of view this shows her meticulous training as a successful writing teacher used to providing positive feedback to papers. Instructors also wanted to know what the assigned task was as the three papers did not seem to be addressing the topic in the same manner. This is another sign that the FYE instructors are operating in line with some criteria, and that they wish to apply it when they face a set of writing assignments.

There were differences of opinion about the ratings of the papers. Paper #3 had been selected as the best of the three papers, but the instructors tended to rate it more or less the same as Paper #2. The ratings did not always match those of the

researcher either. This means that there is difference of opinion concerning what constitutes a “good paper.” Chances are that this would also change the way academic writing is perceived, since the basis for is the same. For the purposes of this study, these differences did not constitute a major problem as the focus of the study was on perceptions of academic writing. Overall, it could be said that the interviews yielded more useful and more interesting data than the questionnaire.

Implications for Pedagogy

The results from this study, along with the goals of the program (see Appendix F) would suggest that the teaching of academic writing is not the primary mission of the FYE. Perhaps it would make better sense to think of this mission as the teaching of successful writing. As it was previously expressed, for many Turkish students this is the first opportunity to do any writing, in any language. It would not be a mistake to claim that the rest — whatever academic writing is expected of these students — happens as a matter of routine exposure and experience with the genre.

In line with the findings of the study it would seem that the FYE program should adhere to general writing instruction according to the current curriculum. As the situation stands, the goals of the university and the writing program do not necessarily require the explicit teaching of academic writing, and there is some evidence that in the long run general writing skills instruction leads to better academic writing. However, it would seem university as a whole could benefit from the establishment of a writing across the curriculum system. This would involve the cooperation of writing instructors and the discipline faculty, and would make it possible to tap into the expertise of both parties. In essence the two groups would

share the responsibility for teaching academic writing. The FYE program should consider including this into its future goals.

Implications for Further Research

More research with other non-FYE academics could have also been relevant in order to figure out if the definitions that are derived from this study are in harmony with their own vision of academic writing (Horowitz, 1986). In other words, it might also be worthwhile to investigate how the vision of the FYE community is in harmony or disaccord with the view of other academic discourse communities in the university.

As was suggested under the pedagogical implications, it may also be worthwhile to conduct a needs analysis study that investigates the feasibility of a writing across the curriculum program at Bilkent University. This could prove to be useful in terms establishing better communications across the university, in hope of serving goals that are common both to the FYE program and to the discipline faculties, the improvement of students writing skills in general and academic skills in particular.

Another possible area of research involves the quantity of the work that is assigned to first year students. The present study has established that the FYE instructors assign a wide variety of written tasks to their students. However, writing is not the only concern of the program FYE program, and preoccupation with other skills may not leave enough opportunities to practice all writing tasks exhaustively. This might suggest that there also is need to look into how much written work is assigned, to determine if it is sufficient for the development of student writing skills.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Gender: ☐ F ☐ M
Native language: ☐ English ☐ Turkish ☐ Other
Teaching experience: _____ years

PART I:

1. For the items listed below please consider your actual syllabi. Check all those writing tasks, which you regularly assign to your students. For each item please also briefly explain:

- A) What you think this kind of assignment aims to do, and**
B) How you think it fosters academic writing

☐ Personal writing (narratives or experiential)

A)

B)

☐ Summaries of assigned texts and/or readings

A)

B)

☐ Responses to assigned texts and/or readings

A)

B)

☐ Response to classroom discussions

A)

B)

☐ In class essays

A)

B)

☐ Case studies

A)

B)

☐ Analytical writing

A)

B)

☐ Writing that requires synthesis

A)

B)

☐ Essay assignments

A)

B)

☐ Research papers

A)

B)

☐ Take home exams

A)

B)

☐ Essay exam questions

A)

B)

☐ Short answer exam questions

A)

B)

☐ Others (Please specify)

A)

B)

☐ None of the above (Please explain)

2. Please take a few minutes to also think about the following. What are some academic writing tasks, which would you like to assign to your students but for various reasons cannot? What other tasks do you think foster academic writing?

PART II: Consider a typical *academic* writing task (such as a research paper, an essay, or a summary) that you are likely assign to your students. Please rate the following items as being more or less desirable in this kind of writing.

1. Student writing should be explicit. The vocabulary should be specific and appropriate.

Less	1	2	3	4	5	More
Desirable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Desirable

2. Student writing should present the topic and/or the argument early on in the text.

Less	1	2	3	4	5	More
Desirable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Desirable

3. Throughout their writing students should provide “maps” or “signposts,” telling their readers where they have been in the text and where they are going.

Less	1	2	3	4	5	More
Desirable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Desirable

4. The language used should create a distance between the writer and the text to give the appearance of objectivity. In other words the student’s personal voice should not be openly present in the writing.

Less	1	2	3	4	5	More
Desirable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Desirable

5. Texts should maintain an objective quality of voice and register. In other words the writing should be free of emotional elements.

Less	1	2	3	4	5	More
Desirable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Desirable

6. Student writers should take a guarded stance, (i.e. “hedging,” or the use of tentative language) especially when presenting argumentation and conclusions.

Less	1	2	3	4	5	More
Desirable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Desirable

7. Student writing should display an understanding of the reality shared by members of the particular discourse community (in this case the particular faculty member who made the assignment)

Less	1	2	3	4	5	More
Desirable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Desirable

8. *Student writing should display a set of social and authority relations; they should show the writer's understanding of the roles they play within the text or context.*

Less	1	2	3	4	5	More
Desirable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Desirable

9. *Student writing should refer to and acknowledge other academic texts without reverting to plagiarism.*

Less	1	2	3	4	5	More
Desirable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Desirable

10. *Student writing should comply with the genre requirements of the classroom (and/or that of the academic community).*

Less	1	2	3	4	5	More
Desirable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Desirable

APPENDIX B: PART III HOLISTIC ANALYSIS/INTERVIEW TOOL

- Overall, how would you rate this paper? Would you say that it is a “good,” “passable” or “bad” piece of student writing? In other words would you rate it as a “sophisticated,” “passable” or “inadequate” piece of writing?
- If you consider that a freshman student wrote this paper, how would you rate it in terms of “academic-ness”? In other words, how “academic” would you say this paper is?
- If this paper is indeed academic, can you point to the qualities/features that make it so? What are they?
- If not what do you think this paper lacks? What are some qualities/features that make it “not so academic?”
- Would you say that this writing is typical of the kind of papers that you get from your students?

APPENDIX C: Sample Paper #1

CULTRAL IDENTITY

Cultral identity means if i understood truely, features, beliefs and ideas that makes me a member of a group. Because I am not a member of a special group I will try to explain my cutral identity by connecting with my family's culture.

My family gives importance to the relationship between the members of it so that I can say that my family is very close to eachother. But first I also should describe what family is according to me. I agree with the person who wrote the 'LOSING YOUR CULTURE' .A family should be close to eachother. They should always come together or they can easily call if it needs. They should be interested in their problems and try to solve them all together.

According to this explaining about the family, I will be disagree with the writer. Because I do not think so that my faly lose its identities. We are still close to each. Maybe we cannot see each other as it was done before but we can call easily and if we have some problems all the members off the family try to solve it. In my point of wiew the reason for not seeing each other is the situations of life ,in other words we can say that the effects of globalisation.

This circumstances, of course effect my cultral identity. I mean the attitude of my family is carried out by the new members such me, my brother, cousins. These impacts give a form to my behaviours, ideas, beliefs. Of course I have my own ideas but some of them are gained by them.

APPENDIX D: Sample Paper #2

GLOBALIZED CULTURE

As 21st century comes, the borders of nations are not canceled yet, but the wave called “globalization”, which removes the differences between the nationalities, is creating peoples called “citizens of world”. It seems very hard to manage this, but globalization is a current that makes people see everything (every value, belief, taught, object...) which is very foreign to them in real, as theirs; like Turkish people and American fast-food culture, Americans and Turkish bath, hamam...

So globalization means meeting at an intersection point which reflects all people, various cultures in the world. Since culture shows how you look at world, by globalization all people gain a new view of world, which comes from different cultures and makes people familiar with all these cultures. But possessing such a mixed culture means sacrificing some values from your own national culture. Because in a such mixture, some of the values of other culture will replace yours. That means ignoring some of your cultural values, which were morally and materially, the most important for you before globalization.

Nowadays this is one of the most discussed problem over globalization; Are we destroying our culture by the current of globalization or are we just tasting different values? In the world, people widely think that people do not lose their culture through globalization; they borrow some values, and others lend them theirs, so your values will survive among more crowded societies. On the other hand this cultural trade can be unfair. Obviously as Turks we are influenced by American culture more than we influence America. This is because more developed countries can easily dominate less developed ones through their modern culture which is mainly provided by technology, that means easier and more attractive life for people. So “cultures of modern societies”

can be considered as a threat against the “traditional and historically rich cultures”. But with the anxiety of losing our culture, we can not close our doors to the outer world; Because, any country which closes in, should provide the necessary development on its own to reach other countries. I don't think that any country, including Turkey can manage this development. Also you can see such countries which closes in and meet with failure such as Russia, in the world history. To survive, a country should always follow the developments, innovations for taking its place in the process of civilization. On the contrary, we should not forget that culture is the bonds that provide the unity in the society. So accepting new values and changing them completely with other nations', can cut these bonds or not suit well enough to us and can cause the dissolution of the society. Nevertheless, if all the people will be the same (like from the same nation) then it will not be so much important whether your society is separate or not. Because all the people in the world will form your society and at least you would know that also other nations have lost their important values to reach such a common culture.

Also majority of people accept that western cultures want to control Easterners by their modern, technological culture and Easterners want to impress Westerns by their traditional, authentic culture. This is, in a way, a culture war by which countries try to dominate the others by the globalization current. I think that Westerns are more lucky in this war because they are less dependent on easterners culture than easterners are.

As a conclusion it is a big conflict how we should allow globalization effect our nation, lifestyle and culture. It seems that the best way, is to get use of the innovations and improvements which are created by the western culture and, myth and tradition of Easterners. And during these cultural interactions which are provided by

globalization, we must keep our vital values alive which are inherited from our ancestors, fit Turkish personality best. That will surely bring our nation further places in the way of civilization without breaking up our social unity.

APPENDIX E: Sample Paper #3

My Culture, My Values

Culture is made up of norms, traditions, morals, folkways, mores, laws and values. It is a set of factors, which are dynamic and integrated into each other strongly. A change in one part of the culture causes some others to change. All the members of the society share it and it represents common meanings for most of the people. Since I am one of the members of this society, I would like to define what culture means to me. It is every action that I have been doing: the way I sit, eat, talk, act, behave and so on. Culture is set of values—which I have learned through socialization. Nobody—including me—was born with the knowledge of culture and values. I was taught my values by my parents and relatives.

According to me, one of the most important aspects of culture is value, which reflect the people clearly and accurately. By knowing someone's values, I may have a lot of ideas about that person. A value can be, having a happy family, being wealthy, having plenty of money or owning a BMW. For instance, it is very important for me to have a strong bond in my relations with my family. I usually try to listen to their advice and take their opinions about the issues that I do not have much idea about. I gave great importance to their thoughts because they are much more experienced than I am and I have to respect them all the time. Also respect is one of the submerging values towards the parents or elder people. I think the new generation has not discovered the essence of showing respect to their parents, yet. In my point of view, losing such a value may cause an anomaly in the near future, because while respect submerges, rudeness appears. Sooner or later rudeness will cause many unintended consequences like the decline of family values or loosen bonds with the family members. So I feel responsible for protecting my values as far as I am able to do so, in this technological, industrial and globalized world.

Globalization has many affects on the family values. For examples with the new inventions like television, computer and so on, members of the family start to lose some

values. The first aspect to talk on can be the effect of TV on our social lives. With the entrance of TV to every house, people start to know much about the world, the actions going on in a particular country or discovering other nations' lives, cultures and peoples. TV caused people to be more insular by sitting in front of the screen and not talking and listening to each other, people became cut off from each other. TV became more important than discussing about a useful issue or dilemmas.

Globalization is the growing interdependence between different regions, peoples and countries in the world. It is now easier to find out what is happening all over the world. Within a globalized world the influences between the nations appeared. For example, the food that we eat or the clothes that we wear may be exported from USA or China. One nation's traditional food or drink can very well be seen in another country's restaurants. If I were to talk about the effects of the globalization on the family values, I have to express that before the industrialism there were much more extended families all around the world. After the changes occurred, nuclear families were formed because the lifestyles were altered and there were not so many agricultural facilities then. When the family was made up of a father, a mother and children, there were more face to face relations with the members. The lifestyle changed a lot compared to the extended families. Parents started to work, and children developed their social lives more freely and themselves as individuals in a society.

My grandparents used to tell me about their own childhood and how they had to obey the rules and how respect was the most important fact in the family. I was really shocked to listen to the relations with their fathers. Years ago, fathers were much more authoritarian with their children. This seems to be decreasing with each generation. So I saw the clear difference between the two generations: forced respect transferred into respect that was formed with love. While my parents were rearing me, I am sure they did not treat me as they were treated in their childhood. So what actually changed was the values and the perceptions about raising children.

Technological changes in society also shape the culture slowly. Everyday there are many inventions being created and it changes the ideas, opinions, lifestyle and values. By the

development of countries, I saw the great decline of family values. I think family is an association that is and always will be needed for the development of values. Of course, values differ from person to person but there are many mutual ones also. Family is the first place where a person socialized. By respecting the family values, I believe a culture will be based on strong roots. No one can refuse the importance of family and family values because it is the particular place where individuals learn to cope with society and life.

Socialization is very important to cope with life and society. I also believed that it is best learnt in extended families because there will always be elders to give advice or to teach many valuable and useful points for life. According to me the values are kept in extended families more than in nuclear ones because usually these types of families have really strong bonds between the members. Every member is aware of one's problems and all the members get together to solve any irritating situation that is going on. Of course, there are some bad aspects of living in such large families as well as the benefits. It is really hard to be free and act independently within such a family. All of the members have to act commonly and in unison and the new generation will not be able to develop themselves as individuals because they will always depend on the family, stick to the indoor activities and have less knowledge about the real life outside the house. The elders will usually want their children and grandchildren sitting next to them or doing all the activities together, but this is almost impossible within this changing world because every member in the family has different interests in life.

By talking about the effects of globalization, industrialism and technology in a nation's family lives, I see the aspects that are also affecting the shape of a Turkish family. Before, there had been some important values like being really polite to elders, sharing opinions or acting as a union with all the members of the family, such as eating meals as a whole family or practicing the religious activities together. After many inventions and industrialism, people's perspectives were not the same anymore. The authority in the family—this person can be the father or the mother—let the members act more freely and do not really became involved with their lives. After those permissions are given, the force is no longer taking place in the new generation's families. The members are responsible for themselves, not for all of the people around them. I think these

declines in the values of family will keep emerging. Soon every member, who has attained independence and maturity, will leave home and have a separate house. That member will lose touch with the cultural values, for example the ones about family or society. A new generation that is losing a culture may not develop themselves as useful people for their countries.

The river flows, you cannot prevent it from being moved into another place.

Globalization or technological changes are also such actions that are going on all around the world; no individual can stop it and get rid of it. It is sort of a needed influence over cultures, peoples and regions. Everyone, all around the world has the knowledge of other nations. Most of the traditions, the styles of dressing, the restaurants or the fast food centers and many issues are very similar within different regions. Globalization will keep affecting nation's lives in useful ways; people just have to know how to benefit from the new inventions, technology and different cultures without losing their own individual identities.

APPENDIX F: Extract from the FYE Program Goals and Objectives

Writing/Research Goals:

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- ❖ **to help students improve their general and academic use of English by:**
- improving process-based written language skills that will prepare them to communicate more effectively in common academic genres, to learn about themselves and their world through writing, and to improve their ability to construct sophisticated research-based texts;
 - developing basic research and documentation skills;
 - encouraging students to improve their study and computer skills.
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Writing/Research Objectives:

In English 101, students will:

1. each complete at least 6-8 pages of revised essay writing of which one is at least 3 pages long, in addition to other class writing (e.g., journals, free-writing, e-mail assignments, etc.);
2. use a process approach to writing that makes use of the following strategies/techniques:
 - pre-writing
 - outlining and drafting
 - revising; negotiating, and acting upon feedback
 - editing/proofreading
3. organize and express ideas in an appropriate manner for writer's audience and purpose which will include at least the following:
 - introductions
 - thesis statements
 - supporting ideas and examples
 - sophisticated sentence structure
 - varied and appropriate word choice
 - unified paragraphs
 - effective transitions within and between paragraphs
 - conclusions
4. begin to develop and improve their sentence structure and word choice (either inductively through extensive reading and process writing or deductively when appropriate);
5. accurately and appropriately summarize, paraphrase and quote the work of others without plagiarizing in preparation for 102;
6. write formal papers using basic word processing;
7. complete one library-based research assignment (not necessarily a writing assignment) that is task-driven and requires the use of BLISS.

In English 102, students will:

1. each complete at least 10 pages of revised essay writing of which 6 to 8 pages is an extended research paper in which students cite, summarize, and synthesize research;
2. complete writing in addition to the above which may include journals, free-writing, e-mail assignments, etc.;
3. increase student proficiency in process-based writing;
4. continue to develop students' ability to organize ideas in an appropriate manner for writer's audience and purpose (see 101 goals for details);
5. evaluate and assess sources (written and electronic) to be used in writing;
6. integrate and synthesize work/research of others into their own writing;
7. avoid plagiarism by using a documentation style, including the following skills:
 - summarizing, paraphrasing and quoting
 - creating a reference list
8. conduct BLISS, Internet and electronic database research (such as *Yahoo!* or *Uncover*);
9. write papers using word processing.